

**What is claimed is:**

1. A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests, and facilitating communication between them, comprising:
  - identifying a web page that a user is viewing;
  - determining the presence of other users at or near the web page that the user is viewing;
  - displaying for the user a listing of the other users determined to be at or near the web page that the user is viewing; and
  - enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein identifying a web page further comprises receiving a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) address of the web page that the user is viewing.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the presence of other users is determined by a distance mapping technique.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the distance mapping technique comprises identifying users viewing web pages having words or phrases of cognitive similarity.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the distance mapping technique comprises comparing a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) address of the web page that the user is viewing to URI addresses of web pages being viewed by other users.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying for the user a listing of the other users further comprises displaying the listing of other users in a graphical user interface (GUI).
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the GUI comprises a web browser.
8. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling the user to view profile data associated with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the profile data comprises one or more of contact information, demographic information, profession, hobbies, or interests.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users further comprises enabling the user to instant message one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users further comprises enabling the user to e-mail one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users further comprises enabling the user to initiate a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) communication with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users further comprises enabling the user to initiate a transaction with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the transaction comprises an exchange of currency.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the transaction comprises an exchange of at least one of airline frequent flier miles, or affinity program points.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling the user to execute a search query against a search engine.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein results of the search query comprise a listing of one or more web pages, and wherein each of the one or more web pages listed is displayed with an associated visual indicator displaying a number of users currently viewing that respective web page.

18. A system for enabling identification of network users having similar interests, and facilitating communication between them, comprising:

means for identifying a web page that a user is viewing;

means for determining the presence of other users at or near the web page that the user is viewing;

means for displaying for the user a listing of the other users determined to be at or near the web page that the user is viewing; and

means for enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.

19. A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests, and facilitating communication between them, comprising:

identifying a data object that a user is accessing;

determining a listing of other users that are currently accessing or that have recently accessed the data object;

displaying for the user the listing of the other users determined to be currently accessing or that have recently accessed the data object; and

enabling the user to communicate with one or more users selected from the displayed listing of other users.